

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

National Homeland Security Research Center

TECHNICAL BRIEF

National Pilot Study of the Expanded "E-Plan HazMat Response System"

Background

EPA's National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC), Threat and Consequence Assessment Division (TCAD), headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, is responsible for developing risk assessment and risk communication information and tools. As part of this responsibility, TCAD is testing an expanded version of the "E-Plan HazMat Response System" (E-Plan) for homeland security use. E-Plan is a secure computer system designed to make facility-specific hazardous material information available online to emergency responders and



homeland security managers. E-Plan was developed in 2000 through the collaborative efforts of EPA's Region 6 (NM, TX, OK, AR, and LA), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and a team from the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD).

Expansion of the E-Plan HazMat Response System

E-Plan is a Web-based information system that assembles facility-specific hazard information from numerous sources. The foundation of E-Plan is EPA's Tier II "Right-to-Know" reporting requirements. Tier II requires emergency plans and an annual hazardous chemical inventory report from facilities that use and store chemicals. The Tier II report must include the amounts and specific locations of chemicals as well as information on how the chemicals are stored at the facility. Information submitted under "Right-to-Know" is often filed in paper form and may not be readily accessible by responders during an emergency.

The expanded version of E-Plan provides electronic access to "Right-to-Know" reports from four additional databases, including 24-hour contact information, site and building plans, chemical inventories, and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for hundreds of additional facilities. Links within the expanded E-plan program provide access to additional hazardous substance fact sheets, local weather information, area GIS maps, and electronic versions of popular response resources, such as the NIOSH Pocket Guide and the Department of Transportation's Emergency Response Guidebook.

The expanded E-Plan also assists homeland security managers by providing information on clustered facilities, thereby increasing their understanding of area-wide risks, allowing the implementation of precautions, and minimizing potential cascading consequences.

Expanded E-Plan Pilot Study

In February 2005,TCAD began a three-month pilot study to test the expanded version of E-Plan. One hundred pilot participants, representing the following groups, are evaluating the expanded program for ease of use, reliability, and accuracy:

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- Small suburban fire departments (wi-fi enabled areas)
- Medium-sized suburban fire departments
- Large suburban fire departments
- Large urban fire departments
- Multi-jurisdictional hazardous materials response teams
- State and federal environmental on-scene coordinators
- Emergency managers
- Homeland security managers

A report detailing the results of the pilot will be available via NHSRC's Web site beginning August 2005. For more information, visit the NHSRC Web site at www.epa.gov/nhsrc.

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